

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

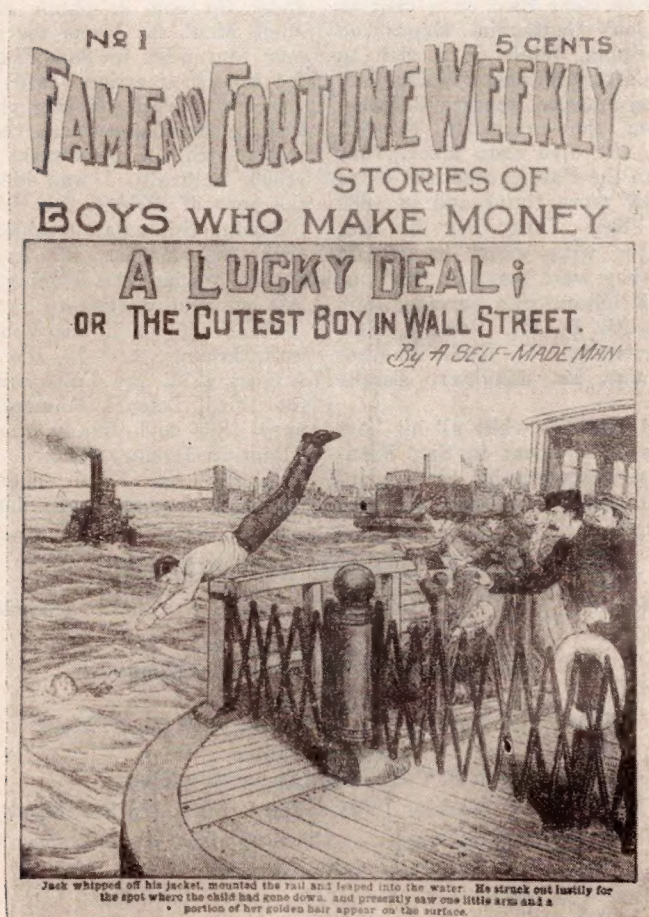
Vol. 23 No. 10

October 15, 1955

Whole No. 277

## James Perkins Tracy—"A Self Made Man"

by Ralph Adimari



Cover of the First Issue of Fame and Fortune Weekly  
(From the Charles Duprez Collection of Dime Novel Pictures.)



## James Perkins Tracy—"A Self Made Man"

by Ralph Adimari

J. Perkins Tracy as he chose to sign his writings was born on San Francisco Bay July 2, 1853, 'on a store slip before wharves existed, and the houses of the inhabitants were mostly tents,' son of Captain James Lawrence Tracy and Maude (Cotterill) Tracy. Educated in public school, he finished a 3-year course at Santa Clara College in Santa Clara, California. When he left school, he got a clerk's job with the Southern Pacific railroad in 1870 in San Francisco.

In 1876 he went East on a visit to that fabulous Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. While on a visit to Maryland after leaving Philadelphia, he met and married Rebecca C. Overend. When they returned to San Francisco, she died soon after. That one visit to the East caused him to go East a few more times and in 1880 while in New York City he met another girl with whom he fell in love and they were married. She was Kate E. Ketchum who survived him on his death in Mt. Vernon, New York, December 15, 1915. Another survivor was his daughter, Estelle M.

Curiously enough while all his boyhood days were spent in San Francisco's varied streets he never went back even only for a visit. Perhaps

the death of his first wife caused this.

What enthused Tracy in the sunset of his life was his status as an amateur journalist in his youth in San Francisco. He says, "I wrote 'Praise the Printer; or, The Little Shop That Was Made to Pay', which was published December 5, 1913 as the 427th number of my Fame and Fortune series, devoted to stories of bright boys who make money. All the Fame and Fortune stories appeared under the nom de plume of 'A Self-Made Man'. As I was the only amateur journalist in San Francisco, at the time in question (1870) who possessed a private printing plant which I had accumulated by degrees until it represented an investment of about \$1500, naturally I was identified as the hero of 'Prince, the Printer'."

During this amateur phase he lived with his mother at 754 Mission Street. During the evening after office hours he worked on his paper the first one of which was Young American, January 1, 1870, the second in August 1871, the California Clipper, the third, Leisure Moments in January 1872 and finally the Literary Album in January 1873.

In fact the Fossil, organ of old timers in amateur journalism asserts:

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Edited by

Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

Assistant Editor

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Asst. Ed. Photography—Charles Duprez, 228 Larch Lane, Smithtown, L.I., N.Y.

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"Tracy was a very important factor in the development of amateur journalism . . ." and that "In the far West he was one of the pioneers among boy editors . . . Thus, he introduced amateur journalism to the Pacific Slope."

In 1874 he left Southern Pacific and decided to devote himself to printing so in January 1875 he began publication of a small monthly of 48 pages called *Salmagundi*. Since he and the Fossil don't include this in his amateur collection I infer it was a professional paper or magazine and this presumes that he was no longer an amateur journalist. Soon after this prior to July 1875 he was bereaved by the death of his mother, no date of death of his father is mentioned, so he moved to the Phoenix Building in order to get more business. He seems to have prospered for he was able to make trips East in 1876 and thereafter.

Soon after marrying a second time Tracy went into the printing business in New York. The New York directories mention him the first time as James P. Tracy, Printer, 113 Nassau House at 126 W. 29th. This is for the year 1882/3. Thereafter he is listed at various addresses living in Manhattan from about 1880 to about 1908 with an interruption in 1900 to 1902 when he moved to the Bronx returning to West Manhattan near Columbia University. From 1908 he moved to Mt. Vernon where he lived to his death.

In 1887 or the year before he became connected with Bell's U. S. Business Directory and when fire destroyed the business and plant in 1894 he began taking the writing profession more seriously. Towards the end of his Manhattan life he listed himself as J. Perkins Tracy, author or journalist.

Aside from his amateur writings in San Francisco not much is known until 1887 when he issued a guide book to Coney Island, Fort Hamilton, Sheepshead, Rockaway Beach and public buildings in New York. The irony of this man coming to New York from the furthest point in the

United States and telling New Yorkers how to get around their own city! And then to write the most informative stories about Wall Street which heretofore had been a fantastic place where only monsters roamed ready to pounce upon the unwary. What Tracy did was simply this; he humanized the Street. From now on his readers were convinced that the people in Wall Street were just like you and I. They were there only to make a living and some were there to get a thrill out of gambling. Best, most of them were former poor boys who had made good.

After the guide book another book company, Street and Smith, published several books. They were issued 1894-6. From this year to 1905 when *Fame and Fortune* was first issued by Frank Tousey nothing is known about his writings so it is presumed they too were written under a nom de plume. Tracy wrote all the *Fame and Fortune* series. As Charlie Bragin asserts in his *Bibliography* there were 488 original titles. This number appeared in December 1915, the month in which Tracy died.

But wonders never ceased for in that week of sadness for Tracy and his family there appeared in person in the local movie and vaudeville theater, Proctor's Mt. Vernon, Captain Jack Crawford, poet and scout famous for many years as an old Indian fighter. The movie showing with him was *The Battle Cry of Peace*. On Wednesday, December 15, Tracy died and a day or two later the *Daily Argus* of Mt. Vernon announced the next attraction for Proctor's was David W. Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation."

Thus in this crisis week, we find the birth not only of a nation but the American motion picture as we know it today and the virtual death of the American dime novel as we knew it yesterday. (The information for the above article was gathered from interviews with Mr. Aaron Warford, connected with Tousey publications to its end in 1928, and statements by J. Perkins Tracy in letter to "The Fossil".)



## THE FIRST ENGLISH PAPERS FOR BOYS

By W. O. G. Lofts

Until last year it was generally accepted in collecting circles in England that the first known publication for boys was the "Youth Miscellany" which appeared in 1822. After months of research in the British Museum, I can state that there was in existence in 1777 a paper for boys entitled "The Young Gentlemen Magazine". A most remarkable thing about this paper is that the only two copies of this magazine known to be in existence are in the Universities of Yale and Illinois, U. S. A.! I have official wording from the British Museum, that there are no copies recorded in any Museum in this country, so how these two copies came to the U. S. A. I would not like to say.

In a letter to me the Librarian of the Yale University gives the following details of this first known paper, "The Young Gentlemen Magazine, or monthly repository of science, moral and entertaining matter. It was published monthly from January to June 1777 and printed for G. Kearsly at no. 46, Fleet-street, London. At the end of June 1777 issue the 'Conductors' of the magazine reluctantly announced the discontinuation of it through lack of financial support." So the magazine definitely finished at that time.

There is a gap now of 22 years before the next paper appeared, this was "The Young Gentlemen and Ladies Magazine" in 1799 which I am pleased to say I have seen. This was very similar in appearance and style of its predecessor, it was edited by a Dr. Mavor and published by J. Walker of Fleet-street; it was published monthly and ran for 12 issues. The cost of the paper was One Shilling, a large amount of money in those days, so I doubt if many boys at that period could afford to buy it. The next known magazine to appear was in 1805; and this had a most successful run, as it ran for 62 years! This was "The Youths Magazine" pub-

lished monthly by W. Kent of Fleet-street. Its contents were very dry and semi-religious at the beginning like those which had appeared before, but as the years of fashion changed so did the paper, and was really an interesting paper to read in later years.

"Youths Instructor and Guardian" appeared in 1817 and had a long run 38 years to be exact. This also was a monthly published by J. Jason of London. "The Youths Miscellany" which appeared in 1822 is well known to collectors of Victorian Literature in England, several collectors that I know have complete sets, this paper alas had a very short life, ending at the 18th issue; its publishers were Sherwood Jones & Co. of London. "New Youths Magazine" came out in the next year, and only 10 issues appeared to the public, it finished late in 1824. W. Wetton was the publisher. When the "Boys and Girls Penny Magazine" appeared in 1832, history was made, because it was the first known weekly magazine for the juvenile public, it was also the first attempt to color the cover, the run of this paper is very uncertain, as the British Museum has numbers up to 18, whilst W. Larson (who has written some fine articles for this paper in the past) has copies up to no. 23. This paper must have had some sort of success, as a month later a rival firm published a similar publication with the reversed title of "Girls and Boys Penny Magazine", this ran at least to 36 issues and its final ending was again uncertain. The publisher of the former was W. Howden and the latter W. Strange. When one sees the big gaps of years between the appearance of papers, he will naturally think that others must have appeared between. This may be so, but I do think that this is one of the most complete records ever compiled of the first English papers for Boys.

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(Ed. Note. Does anyone know how copies of "The Young Gentlemen Magazine" came into the hands of the University of Illinois and Yale University?)



## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 204 Roy Phelps, 522 Federal Ave., Seattle 2, Wash. (New member)  
 205 W. R. Johnsen, 416 Wheeler St., Ardmore, Okla. (Old member)

## NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph Cummings

Denis R. Rogers' new address is Room 802, 111 Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal, P. Q., Canada. Now if any of the brother members wish to do a little traveling, take in Montreal and visit our good brother, Denis, and when he gets a chance, he'll do the same.

One of our old timers, W. R. Johnsen, 416 Wheeler St., Ardmore, Okla., has joined up with again, and we all wish you the very best of everything. He is interested in all novels; see ad.

George French has had some very good finds lately up in Maine. So you see fellows, there's still novels around.

Anyone having any N. Y. 5c Libraries (see ad) get in touch with Judge Shanley right away.

Just heard from two members that have been in the hospital. Wm. E. Bennett, 2305 Indiana Ave., R, Kansas City 29, Mo. went to the hospital in June, and had his gall bladder taken out, as it wasn't working right, and gall stones also; then he had an infection set in, and had a heck of a time of it, but he is coming along very good now. He was released Sept. 12th, so now Bill says he'll just have to eat his way back again.

Harry B. Hamilton, 209 So. La Salle St., Chicago 4, Ill. says they grabbed him last June, and put him in the hospital. He had two major operations, then they found an obstruction in colon and removed 18 inches; then after a time they took out his prostate gland, and they let him out Sept. 13th. He dropped from 205 lbs. to 160 lbs. He is going to stay home and read his set of Golden Argosies, says he is gaining strength and eating like a horse.

Harry likes Golden Argosies, so do I. I just finished reading no. 19 of Paul Jones Weekly and 3 or 4 weeks ago it was a new Nick Carter Week-

ly. These two are the first I've read in quite a while.

Harry B. McConnell, Cadiz, Ohio, writes he has so many books, novels, and what not, that he is going to get rid of some of them very shortly, so if any one is interested, write him now.

Charles Bragin is still sticking around and trying to duck a hospital operation by getting medical treatment every week.

J. Edward Leithead has done it again, for he had a very fine article this time on "The Greatest Sleuth That Ever Lived", Nick Carter. It was a very meaty article, and we all thank him for all he is doing and all the nice articles he writes, for he has written some Carters. We also want to thank bros. Houston and others for the help they've given him. Keep up the good work, Ned.

"News From Home" magazine published by the Home Insurance Co., 59 Maiden Lane, New York, N. Y., has a front cover of an old "Crockett" Almanac, 1842, on the front cover. Looks like an old dime novel, yellow back. There is also 3 pages of reading and 6 or more illustrations inside, very interesting, whether a dime novel or almanac collector.

Frisco Bert Couch and his wife have arrived back home again, after a very wonderful trip down Mexico and South America way. Frisco is a great fisherman, last year he caught 222 trout, 73 bull frogs, 17 blue gills, 12 black bass, and 1083 crawfish. This year he arrived home too late. Frisco also is a collector of U. S. gold coins, so if any one has any, and wants to turn them into good cash money, write to Frisco Bert Couch, P. O. Box 445, San Anselmo, California. He'll give you a good profit on them.

Laura Jean Libbey — Born New York City, March 22nd, 1862, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Libbey. Was engaged to Wm. J. Benners,



1891-2-3, but married Sept. 23rd 1898 to De Mater Stillwell. Very unhappily married, no children. Worked in Pattern factory before she took up lurid literature of a highly colored and unnatural type. Also wrote "First Aids to Wounded Hearts," a series of syndicated articles for the Press. Said to have received \$150.00 per installment from Fireside Companion and \$100.00 per installment from New York Ledger. Her sister, Alice Paige, wrote under name of "Oliva Fairchild."

Florence Marryatt was really Mrs. Ross Church.

Wm. Langell says he bought a fine book called "The Life and Adventures of Joaquim Murieta, The Celebrated California Bandit", by Yellow Bird (John Rollin Ridge), University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla. Cloth \$2.00. It's a new book but a reprint of one written 160 years ago. The only known copy of the original is owned by a private collector. The author, "Ridge", was half Cherokee, hence the Indian name "Yellow Bird." It's a good item to have with the Murieta stories in Beadle's Dime Library.

Bill says he has a copy of Laird and Lee's Dalton Brothers, the original one, so have I, so that's two that we know about. Bill is trying to get a copy of Laird & Lee's James Boys in Old Missouri, says he read it as a boy, but would love to have it now.

The Worcester Telegram for March 22, 1955, had an item on a London bookseller, not identified, paying \$25,760 for a copy of Audubon's "Birds of America". The book was published between 1827 and 1838. It is about a yard wide and contains colored plates. John Heathcote of Covington Castle, Peterborough, was the owner.

The next issue of the Dime Novel Round-up will contain The James Boys and the Northfield Bank Robbery, by Roy E. Swannstrom. This article was announced for this month's issue but space did not permit.

## EXCHANGE COLUMN

Wanted: Buffalo Bill Border Stories #58, 60, 90, 131, 133, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 148, 151, 161, 183, 197 or Great Western Library #71, 73, 103, 146, 147. Charles Bragin, 1525 W. 12th St., Brooklyn 4, N. Y.

For Sale at 25c ea. Round the World Library, Adventure Library, Jesse James (Westbrook), Nick Carters, Buffalo Bills, also other novels. George Sahr, 7025 31st Ave., Kenosha, Wis.

Will swap Dime Novel Papers; Dime Novel Mart and Roundups for novels. I have them for years back, value them at 5c each, Robert H. Smeltzer, 3432 No. Bodine St., Phila, Pa.

For Trade, Young Klondike No. 39 in good sound condition for novels I want. Best trade offer takes it. Fred Lee, Apt. 204, 40 Jackson Place, Indianapolis 25, Ind.

Wanted: Will pay \$2.25 for nice copies of Pluck and Luck #392 Boys of New York Pocket Library #190, Boys Star Library #121. Also want Golden Days, Bound Volumes 16 and 18 and data on John T. Morgan. Roy B. Van Devier, 95 West South St., Akron, Ohio.

## WANTED

New Nick Carter Weekly #280, Fame & Fortune #27, #181, Beadle's Dime Library #102, #477, Work & Win #293, #439.

W. R. JOHNSON

416 Wheeler, Ardmore, Oklahoma

## WANTED

New York Five Cent Library No. 84. Hack Skelly, the Great Featherweight. and No. 85, King Kelly, the famous catcher.

JAMES A. SHANLEY

Judge, Probate Court, District of New Haven, New Haven, Conn.

## FOR SALE

Frank Merriwell's for sale, Merriwell Series, thick copies by Street & Smith, 50c per book. Over 200 copies.

John Hildebrand

3916 7th Ave. Brooklyn 32, N. Y.



## SINGLE COPY SALE

The following weeklies are offered at 25c and 10c each. Minimum order \$1.00. Make your order all one kind, or assort any way you wish. No specific dates selected. Some issues are higher priced and are not offered in this sale. No duplicates. Postpaid. Subject to prior sale.

### 25c EACH:

Old Sleuth's Own  
Waverly Libr. (Ivers)  
Beadle's Frontier  
Wild West (small)  
Seaside Libr. (Munro)  
Leisure Hour (Lupton)  
Franklin Square (Harper)  
Globe Libr.  
Morning News Libr.  
Union Square (Munro)  
Windsor Libr.  
Munro's Library  
Continental Library  
Lakeside Library  
Riverside (Munro)  
Peoples Lib. (Ogilvie)  
Frank Leslie Lady's Mag.  
Young Ladie's Journal  
Young American (1935-38)  
Pleasant Hours (Leslie)  
Boys ½d Leader  
Chums  
Boys Leisure Hour  
British Boys Paper  
Young Englishman  
Boys Comic Journal  
Boys Monster Weekly  
Boys of the British Empire  
Comrades  
Fact and Fiction  
The Whole Family  
Once a Week (Leslie)  
Happy Hours (Maine)  
Hearthstone  
Fireside Visitor  
Deadwood Dick  
Harper's Weekly  
The Little Corporal

### 25c EACH:

Forrester Boys & Girls  
Student & Schoolmate  
The Children's Hour  
Playmate (Forrester)  
Merry's Museum (Parley)  
Arm Chair Library  
Arm Chair Story Paper  
The Nursery  
Ballou's Monthly  
Chimney Corner  
Puck  
Judge  
Life (old comic wky)  
New York Weekly  
Fireside Companion  
Saturday Night  
Family Story Paper  
New York Ledger

### 10c EACH:

Something to Read (Brett)  
Brookside Lib. (Tousey)  
Fireside Novellist  
Family Library  
The World Supplement  
Am. Home Literature  
Family Herald Supplement  
Peoples Illust. Journal  
Comfort  
Youth's Companion  
Boys of England  
Up to Date (English)  
Boys of the Empire  
Our Boys Journal  
Young Men of Great Britain.

**RALPH P. SMITH**

Box 985

Lawrence, Mass.



## FOR SALE

- Golden Days—Bound Vols. Nice Vols. 10 to 15 inc. \$3.00 per vol. or all for \$17.00 (for Boys & Girls in the 1890's) with stories by Edw. S. Ellis, Stephens, Alger, etc.
- Hey there Sucker. By Jack Dodswell, 1946, illust. fine, D/WD, Circus & Show, nice ----- 3.00
- "How to Become an Inventor" and "How to Cook" in Tousey's Handbook Series, 1902, each ----- .25
- How to Raise Productive Pullets (Chickens, etc.) 1946, nice ----- .25
- Case File Detective (mag.) vol. 1, No. 1, Feb. 1946 and Cowboy Stories, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1925, nice, .60 each or both for ----- 1.00
- Father Coughlin, Radio Priest, or the Shrine of the Little Flower, The Life Works of Rev. Father Coughlin. By R. Mugglebee, 1933. Cloth bound, D/WD, illust., nice ----- 1.00
- We Fell in Love with the Circus, by Claire Hallard Fawcett. A collectors item. nice. A \$5 book for only ----- 3.00
- U. S. Coin Book (Look up that rare coin you have) nice ----- 1.50
- Old Trade Cards, good, assorted. 30 for ----- 1.00
- Old Advertising cards, good, assorted. 25 for ----- 1.00
- Red Men's Horizons, by Walter Parnell, 1945. (Indian of the old West Galore.) Nice ----- .50
- "Circus in Color" and "The Wonder City That Moves By Night." Both Beautifully illustrated, mostly in color (Nat. Geo. Mag., Mar. 1948) scarce .75
- 250 old Postmarks of cities, towns, same R. R.'s etc., good assortment, mostly with stamp on them. ----- 1.00
- British Circus Life. By Lady Eleanor Smith and John Hinde, 1948. lots in color, D/W's (nat. fiction) Beautiful for a collectors Library. Nice 3.00
- Who's Who in Sports (Intimate facts about 600 celebrities) Illus. 1931 good .50
- Currier & Ives, by F. A. Conningham, 1950. (The American Arts Library) colored pictures for the collector. "The life of a Fireman", "American Whalers Crushed in the Ice", "American Country Life", "The Village Street", etc. and others in B & W, fights, etc. Nice. ----- 1.25
- Railroad Series #96, Gipsy Blair, the Western Detective. By Judson R. Taylor. 1883. (A cracking good western story, and Companion to Macon Moore) nice ----- .60
- The Circus has no Home. By Rupert Craft-Cooke. (autobiographical account of the authors life and works with an English Tenting Circus. Illust. Fine. ----- 3.00
- Sahr's Frank Reade Library Vol. 1, No. 1, The Steam Man, 1927. (Picture of the Steam Man on the front cover. Nice. ----- .50
- 210 old and new postcards, used & unused, a good lot. ----- 2.00
- 20 old Sweet Caporal Cigarette cards, about 1890's, good ----- 1.00
- New York 5c Library (Reproduction) #87, Yale Murphy, The Great Short-stop, or the Little midget of the Giant New York Team, by Billy Boxer, the Referee (looks like the original) nice ----- .60
- British Boxing, by Denzil Batchelor, 1948, (Homan & Tom Sayers in color) Illust. D/W's, nice ----- 1.00
- British Railways, by Arthur Elton, 1948, illus. some in color, D/W's, nice 1.00
- American Silver, by K. C. Buhler, American Glass, by K. M. McClinton, both illust. D/W's, both nice, each ----- 1.00
- 100 assorted Old Youths Companions from 1840 up, good, all for ----- 13.00
- 100 Old Mail Order Mags. such as Comfort, Happy Hours, Fireside Visitor, and many others, assorted, 1885 up, for ----- 13.00
- 100 old newspapers, assorted, 1825 up, a fine assortment for ----- 13.00
- Everything sent post paid in the U. S. A.

**Ralph F. Cummings**

**Fisherville, Mass.**